
Name of Organization: US Forest Service, North Central Research Station

Type of Organization: Federal Agency

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Project Title: Protecting Representative Ecosystems in Lake Superior Basin

Project Category: Habitat (Ecological) Protection and Rest

Rank by Organization (if applicable): 0

Total Funding Requested (\$): 117,900 **Project Duration:** 2 Years

Abstract:

The watershed of Lake Superior occupies parts of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota within the U. S. Within the basin, there are 24 subsections (mapped ecological units of 10's to 1000's of square miles that correspond roughly to landforms of similar geology and glacial history). Twelve subsections have more than 50% of land area within the Lake Superior Basin (LSB). Planning for natural landscape reserves that encompass the plant and animal communities occurring within the subsections of the LSB contributes to protection of biodiversity at many spatial scales. Representing relatively undisturbed examples of ecosystems also provides a network of sites as baselines for monitoring and research. Within the LSB, several agencies are already planning for representative ecosystems. On-going conservation activities include ecoregion-based planning of The Nature Conservancy, active natural areas programs in all three states, and the regionwide Research Natural Area (RNA) assessment of the U.S. Forest Service Eastern Region. Four national forests manage land within the LSB.

The overall goal is to build on current conservation planning through interagency cooperation to confirm what ecosystems need to be represented within the subsections of the LSB, then work cooperatively to designate suitable areas within the operating framework of each public agency or private organization involved. This proposal requests funding for the first phase of this project. During this phase, cooperators would discuss representational goals and needs, and decide what land protection status is equivalent to that of Forest Service RNAs. For the 24 subsections, compiled information (maps, expert opinion, assessments, databases, aerial photos, inventories) would be used to identify and prioritize sites that would fill representational needs. The appropriate agency would then proceed with establishment/designation of the top priority sites in 10 of the subsections.

Geographic Areas Affected by the Project

States:

<input type="checkbox"/> Illinois	<input type="checkbox"/> New York
<input type="checkbox"/> Indiana	<input type="checkbox"/> Pennsylvania
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michigan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wisconsin
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minnesota	<input type="checkbox"/> Ohio

Lakes:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Superior	<input type="checkbox"/> Erie
<input type="checkbox"/> Huron	<input type="checkbox"/> Ontario
<input type="checkbox"/> Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/> All Lakes

Geographic Initiatives:

<input type="checkbox"/> Greater Chicago	<input type="checkbox"/> NE Ohio	<input type="checkbox"/> NW Indiana	<input type="checkbox"/> SE Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/> Lake St. Clair
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Primary Affected Area of Concern: Not Applicable

Other Affected Areas of Concern:

For Habitat Projects Only:

Primary Affected Biodiversity Investment Area: Not Applicable

Other Affected Biodiversity Investment Areas:

Problem Statement:

A network of protected representative ecosystems is needed within the Lake Superior Basin to provide for biodiversity protection and for baselines for monitoring and research. Within the Lake Superior Basin in the U.S., several agencies are already involved in planning for representative ecosystems. On-going conservation activities include ecoregion-based planning of The Nature Conservancy, active natural areas programs in all three states, and the regionwide Research Natural Areas assessment of the U.S. Forest Service Eastern Region. Limited funding has hampered efforts to coordinate planning, compile information, conduct site inventories, prioritize sites by quality, and establish/designate suitable sites to protect a network of representative ecosystems across a broad spatial scale.

Proposed Work Outcome:

The project proposes to plan and implement a network of protected representative ecosystems across a broad spatial scale (Lake Superior Basin). The first phase would establish a basic network of research natural areas (RNAs) or other natural area equivalents for every major ecosystem in the Lake Superior Basin. This would be accomplished by:

- (1) coordinating ongoing conservation efforts at a large spatial scale (Lake Superior Basin)
- (2) confirming with cooperating agencies and organizations what ecosystems need representation within the 24 subsections (ecological units) within the Lake Superior Basin
- (3) for ecosystems in need of representation, compiling information about which sites might provide this representation (from data bases, expert knowledge, field inventories)
- (4) funding the designation/establishment of those top priority sites, for 10 of the 12 subsections with >50% land area within the Lake Superior Basin, that meet appropriate screening criteria, using the operating framework of each public agency or private organization involved

Project Milestones:

Dates:

Initial meeting with collaborators	11/2000
Assign task groups by subsections	11/2000
Confirm representational goals/needs	01/2001
Summary of site information	05/2001
New inventories where needed	10/2001
Priorities identified for 10 subsections	11/2001
Plan for designate by agency process	11/2001
Implementation of plan for designation	10/2002

☒ Project Addresses Environmental Justice

If So, Description of How:

Tribes, counties, agencies, organizations would be invited to be project cooperators in planning and implementing a network of representative ecosystems. Representation of protected areas on tribal or private lands would be pursued only on a willing basis. Any designation on public lands would follow appropriate legal processes at the federal, state, and county levels, including National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and National Forest Management Act (NFMA).

☐ Project Addresses Education/Outreach

If So, Description of How:

Project Budget:

	Federal Share Requested (\$)	Applicant's Share (\$)
Personnel:	0	10,000
Fringe:	0	0
Travel:	10,000	0
Equipment:	0	0
Supplies:	200	0
Contracts:	79,800	0
Construction:	0	0
Other:	0	0
Total Direct Costs:	90,000	10,000
Indirect Costs:	27,900	0
Total:	117,900	10,000
Projected Income:	0	0

Funding by Other Organizations (Names, Amounts, Description of Commitments):

Funding applied for from Coastal Environment Management Funds (proposal submitted through habitat committee)--funding unavailable for FY2000, but listed in LaMP2000 as proposed project

Some limited funding in time contributions of personnel may be available from national forests and from cooperators.

Description of Collaboration/Community Based Support:

Potential and confirmed collaborators include: U.S. Forest Service (national forests in Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, Regional RNA Program, Eastern Regional Office); The Nature Conservancy; Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources; tribes; Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; National Park Service; and counties.